ARTICLES

OF

VISITATION and INQUIRY,

Concerning Matters Eccleſiaſtical,

EXHIBITED

To the Miniſters, Church-Wardens and Sidemen of every Pariſh within the *Dioceſe* of

Bath and Wells,

In the Epiſcopal Viſitation of the Right Reverend Father in God,

WILLIAM

By Divine Providence Lord Biſhop of *BATH and WELLS,*

And in the 30. year of his Tranſlation to that See.

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The Tenor of the Oath to be Administred to the Church-wardens and Side-men of every Parish.

YOu shall Swear to inquire with your best diligence, and to make a true Answer unto every Article of this Book now given you in Charge; and to present every Person that now is or of late was Inhabiting within your Parish, that hath done any Offence, or omitted any Duty therein mentioned. And this you shall do as in the sight of God uprightly and truly, without Favour or Malice, hope of Reward, or fear of Displeasure; *So help you God.*

ARTICLES
OF
Visitation and Inquiry
Within the
Dioceſe of BATH and WELLS.

TITUL. I.
Concerning Churches and Chappels, with the Ornaments and Furniture thereunto belonging.

I. IS your Parish Church or Chappel kept in good and ſufficient repair? Are the Roofs thereof well covered with Lead, Tile or Slate, the Windows well glazed, the Floors well paved, the Seats well faſtned and conveniently placed; and all things ſo decently ordered as becometh the Houſe of God?

II. HATH the Steeple or Tower of your Church or Chappel, or any part thereof, been pulled down, or any of the Lead or Bells formerly belonging thereunto been imbezelled, ſold or made away? In whoſe hands or cuſtody doth

the same or any part thereof remain? Declare what you know or have heard herein.

III. IS there a Font of stone, with a good Cover thereunto, standing in a convenient place towards the lower part of your Church, for the administration of Baptism? And is there in your Chancel a decent Communion-Table for the Administration of the Lords Supper, with a Carpet of Silk, Stuff, or fine Woollen cloth, and another Covering of white & pure Linnen to spread thereupon? And have you a fair Communion-cup or Chalice, with a cover of Silver, and one or more Flagons of Silver or Pewter thereunto belonging?

IV. HAVE you in your said Church or Chappel a convenient Seat or Pew for your Minister to read Divine Service in, a Pulpit with a comely Cloth or Cushion for the same, a Bible of the last Translation in a large Volume, and the Book of Common-Prayer, both well and substantially bound? Have you likewise the Book of Homilies set forth by Authority, a Book of Canons and Constitutions Ecclesiastical, and a painted Table of the Degrees wherein Marriage is prohibited?

V. HAVE you a comely large Surplice for the Minister to wear at all times of his publick Ministration in the Church provided, and to be duly washed at the charge of the Parish?

VI. HAVE you a Register-book of Parchment, wherein to register the Names and Surnames of all such persons as are married, christned or buried within your Parish; together with the Names and Surnames of both the Parents of the children so christned, expressing the day, moneth & year of all such christnings, marriages and burials? And is the Transcript thereof yearly within one Moneth next after the 25. of March brought into the Bishops Registry?

VII. HAVE you likewise another Book or Paper, wherein to record the Names & Licenses of all such strangers as are admitted at any time to preach in your Church or Chappel? As also a third Book, wherein to write down the Church-wardens Accounts, together with a strong chest with Locks and Keyes, wherein to keep the aforesaid Books,

and

and all other the aforementioned Furniture in safe custody? And, lastly, have you a Bier with a black Herse-cloth for the burial of the Dead?

Tit. II.

Concerning the Church-yard, the Houses, Glebes and Tithes belonging to the Church.

I. IS your Church-yard sufficiently fenced with Walls, Rails or Pales, and decently kept from the annoyance of Swine, Horses, and other cattle, or any other abuse whatsoever? Hath any person incroched upon the same, or made any door into it out of his own ground or habitation, without allowance from the Ordinary? Have any Trees there growing been cut down, how long since, by whom, and to whose use and benefit?

II. IS the House of your Parson, Vicar or Curate, with all the Out-houses thereunto belonging, kept in good and sufficient repair, or have any of the said Houses or Out-houses been defaced or pulled down without License from the Ordinary, and by whom? Hath any person incroched upon any garden, yard or close belonging to your Parsonage or Vicarage-house, or cut up any Trees growing thereon, or changed or removed the ancient marks and bounds of the same?

III. HAVE you a true and perfect Terrier of all the Glebe-lands, Gardens, Orchards, Tenements or cottages belonging to your Parsonage or Vicarage; as also a note of such Pensions, Rate-tithes, and portions of Tithes, or other yearly profits, either within or without your Parish, as belong thereunto? Hath any of the same been withheld from your Minister, and by whom as you know or have heard?

IV. HAVE any of the ancient Glebe-lands belonging to your Parsonage or Vicarage been taken away or exchanged for other, without the free consent of the Incumbent and License from the Ordinary? Have any Inclosures been made in your Parish to the detriment of the Church by the decay

decay of Tillage, and converting arable Land into Pasture, by whom hath the same been made, and how many years since, and how much is your Parsonage or Vicarage damnified thereby in the yearly value thereof as you know, believe or have heard?

Tit. III.

Concerning Ministers.

I. IS your Minister, a Priest or Deacon, Episcopally ordained, according to the laws of the Church of England?

II. IS he defamed, or suspected to have obtained either his Benefice or Orders by any Simoniacal compact?

III. HATH he been legally instituted and inducted into his Benefice, and did he within two months after his Induction publickly in the Church upon some Sunday or Holyday, in the time of Divine Service, read the 39. Articles of the Church of England established by Authority, and there publickly declare his assent thereunto?

IV. HATH he any other Ecclesiastical Benefice, Prebend or Dignity? Is he constantly resident upon his Benefice amongst you? How many weeks in any one year hath he been absent from it without urgent necessity?

V. HATH your Minister a Curate to assist him? Is the said Curate in Holy Orders, an able and discreet person, and conformable to the Laws and Orders of the Church of England? Is he allowed by the Bishop to serve in your Church or Chappel? And doth he serve in any other Church beside? And what yearly Stipend doth your Minister allow him?

VI. DOTH your Parson, Vicar or Curate, in reading the daily Morning and Evening Service, Administration of the holy Sacraments, celebration of Marriage, Churching of Women after Child-birth, Visitation of the Sick, Burial of the dead, and pronouncing Gods commination against impenitent sinners, use the Form and Words prescribed in the Book of Common-Prayer without any addition, omission

or

or alteration of the same? And doth he use all such rites and ceremonies in all parts of Divine Service, as are appointed in the said Book?

VII. DOTH your Minister at the reading or celebrating any divine Office in your Church or Chappel wear the Surplice, together with such other Scholastical habit as is suitable to his degree?

VIII. DOTH he observe the Holy-dayes and Fasting-dayes, as also the Ember-weeks, and the yearly Perambulation in Rogation-week, as in the Common-Prayer-Book, or by the Ecclesiastical Canons is appointed, giving notice to the Parishioners of every of the same in the Church in the time of Divine Service upon the Sunday next before?

IX. HATH your Minister been Licenced to preach by the Bishop or either of the two Universities? If so, doth he then constantly (unless in case of sickness, necessary absence, or other reasonable impediment) himself preach in your Church or Chappel one Sermon every Sunday? Or if he be not a Licenced Preacher, or being so Licenced be hindred by sickness or otherwise as aforesaid, doth he procure a Sermon to be so preached by some other Minister, a Licenced Preacher, or one of the Homilies set forth by Authority to be there read by a Priest or Deacon lawfully ordained?

X. DOTH your Minister diligently instruct the youth of your Parish in the Church-Catechism, and doth he prepare and present them being so instructed to be confirmed by the Bishop? And doth he endeavour to reclaim all Popish Recusants and other Sectaries (if any such be inhabiting within your Parish) to the true Religion established in the Church of England, and to their bounden duty in obeying the Laws, and submitting to the government thereof?

XI. DOTH he neglect to visit the Sick, or delay the Baptism of any Infant that is in danger of death? Is there any child past infancy or other person of more years through your Ministers default yet remaining unbaptized in your Parish? Doth he baptize any without God-fathers and God-mothers, or admit either of the Parents to be God-father or God-mother to their own children?

XII.

XII. DOTH he in his Sermons preach sound Doctrine, tending to the edification of the people in the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ, and obedience to Gods holy Commandements? Or hath he at any time (as you know or have heard) preached any false, heretical, seditious or schismatical Doctrine, thereby to seduce the people into parties and factions, to the disturbance of the publick Peace, and Unity either of Church or State?

XIII. HATH he presumed to marry any persons in private houses, or such as being under age have not the consent of their Parents; or without the Banes first published on three Sundays or Holy-dayes in the Church, or at any other hours then between eight and twelve in the Morning?

XIV. DOTH any person preach in your Parish as a Lecturer? Hath he allowance from the Bishop for so doing? Doth he before his Lecture read Divine Service according to the Book of Common-Prayer, and is he in all respects conformable to the Laws and Orders of the Church of England?

XV. HATH your Minister taken upon him to appoint any publick or private Fasts, Prophecyings or Exercises not appointed by Authority? Or doth he or any other, either Minister or Lay-person, hold any conventicles or meetings in private houses within your Parish for people of several families to resort unto, under the pretence of preaching, praying, thanksgiving or humiliation, contrary to the Laws and Canons in that case provided?

XVI. IS your Parson, Vicar, Curate or Lecturer a man of sober, unblameable and exemplary life? Doth he familiarly converse with ungodly, vicious and excommunicate persons? Is he a frequenter of Taverns or Ale-houses, a common Gamster, a prophane or obscene Jester, a Swearer, a Rayler, Scoffer or Quarreller? Doth he set Neighbours at variance one with another, or encourage them to suits and contention? Is he noted to be an intemperate drinker, or vehemently suspected of incontinency with any person either within your Parish or without? Is his apparel grave and decent both for fashion and colour, as the Canons of the

Church

Church require? Or is his carriage and converſation in any kind whatſoever diſorderly or ſcandalous, and unbeſeeming a Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt;

XVII. DOTH your Miniſter uſe before his Sermon to pray for the Kings Majeſty, King Charles his Royal Conſort Queen Katherine, Mary the Queen Mother, James Duke of York, and the Royal Progeny; giving unto His Majeſty ſuch Stile and Title of Supreme Governour in all cauſes and over all perſons, aſwell Eccleſiaſtical as Temporall, as are due unto His Majeſty?

Tit. IV.

Concerning the Pariſhioners.

I. IS there in your Pariſh any perſon a known or reputed Heretick or Schiſmatick, any Papiſt, Familiſt, Anabaptiſt, Quaker, or other Sectary, that refuſe to come unto the publick Aſſemblies, Prayers or Services of the Church; or that make profeſſion of any other Religion then what is eſtabliſhed in the Church of England? And if there be any ſuch, what are their names?

II. IS there any perſon in your Pariſh that lyeth under a common fame or vehement ſuſpicion of Adultery, Fornication or Inceſt? are there any common Drunkards within your Pariſh, or common Swearers, or Blaſphemers of Gods Name, or any that are noted to be Railers, unclean or filthy Talkers, or Sowers of Sedition, Faction and Diſcord amongſt their Neighbours?

III. DO any of your Pariſh upon the Sundayes or Holy-dayes follow their bodily and ordinary labour, or permit their Servants ſo to do, or any Shops kept open, or Wares ſold, or do any Vintners, Inne-keepers, or other Victuallers and Sellers of Beer or Ale, ſuffer any perſons to tipple or game in their houſes upon thoſe dayes?

IV. DOTH every perſon inhabiting or ſojourning within your Pariſh duly reſort unto your Church or Chappel upon every Sunday and Holy-day appointed for Divine

Service? Do they then and there abide quietly, with reverence, order and decency, during all the whole time of Common-Prayer, Preaching, or other Service of God there used? And are there any among you that come onely to the Preaching and not to the Common-Prayers of the Church?

V. DOTH every person reverently uncover his head, and so continue all the time of Divine Service and Sermon in the Church? Do they all reverently kneel at the Prayers, and stand up when the Créed and Gospel are read, making due reverence when the Name of our Lord JESUS is mentioned?

VI. ARE there any in your Parish that refuse to send their Infant-children to be baptized publickly in the Church, unless in case of urgent danger, in which case the child may be baptized at home by a lawful Minister after the Form and Rites appointed in the Liturgy? Or do they send them to be baptized in any other Parishes, or after other Form then is appointed? Or do they keep them unbaptized any longer time then the Church allowes? And are there any Infants or more aged persons in your Parish as yet unbaptized?

VII. DOTH every Housholder in your Parish cause their children and servants to learn their Catechism, and to give an account thereof unto your Minister, as he shall require it of them openly in the Church upon Sundayes and Holy-dayes, as in the Book of Common-Prayer is appointed, that when they are well instructed in the same, they may be confirmed by the Bishop?

VIII. IS there any person in your Parish, who being 16. years of age, and well instructed in Religion, doth not receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper at least three times in the year, of which Easter is alwayes to be one? Doth any in your Parish refuse to receive the same kneeling, or from the hands of your own Minister, repairing for it to other Parishes and Ministers abroad? Or are there any strangers not of your Parish, that forsake their own Churches, and usually repair to yours for it?

IX. HAVE you any among you that be denounced and declared Excommunicate for any crime committed? How

long

long have they bæn so excommunicated, and do any of your Parish kæp society with them before they be reconcil'd to the Church and absolved?

X. ARE there any living in your Parish who have bæn unlawfully married, contrary to the Laws of God? Or any that being lawfully divorced have married again? Or any that being lawfully married, and not separated or divorced by course of Law, do not cohabit together?

XI. ARE there any married Women in your Parish, who, after their delivery from the peril of Childbirth, refuse to make their publick Thanksgiving to God in the Church? And when they come so to do, do they come decently apparelled, and make their Offerings according to custom?

XII. ARE there any belonging to your Parish who refuse to pay their Duty for Easter-Offerings to your Minister, or any that refuse to contribute and pay the Rate assessed upon them for the repair of your Church or Chappel, and for the providing of such Books, Furniture and Ornaments as be requisite for the performance of all Divine Offices there?

XIII. DO any refuse to bury their Dead according to the Rites of the Church of England? And are there any Wills or Testaments of persons dead in your Parish that be yet unproved, or any Goods administred without a due Grant from the Ordinary? Did any dying in your Parish or elsewhere leave any Legacy to your Church or Chappel, or to the use of the Poor, or to any other pious and charitable purposes? What were those Legacies, and how have they bæn bestowed?

XIV. DO you know or have you heard of any person in your Parish who hath made any gain by presenting or procuring a presentation for any Clerk or Minister to any Ecclesiastical Benefice upon any bargain, either for Money, or Pension, or Lease, reserve of Tithes or Glebe, or any part thereof, or any other Simoniacal compact whatsoever?

XV. IS there any strife and contention among any of your Parish for their Pews or Seats in your Church? Have any new Pews bæn erected in your Chancel or in the

body of your Church or Chappel, without leave from the Ordinary?

XVI. IS the fifth day of November observed and kept in your Parish, and also the thirtyeth of January, and the nine and twentieth day of May, every of them yearly according to the several Acts of Parliament, and in such form, and as by publick Authority is appointed for the same?

XVII. IS there any in your Parish who hath depraved, vilified or spoken against the Book of Common-Prayer now established in the Church of England, or any part thereof, or against the Government of the Church under His Majesty, by Archbishops, Bishops and other Ecclesiastical Officers, or have spoken disgracefully of the Courts Ecclesiastical?

XVIII. DO you know of any that have abused the Church-wardens of your Parish, or given them evil words for executing their Office, or to dishearten and deter them, executing it as by Oath and Duty they are bound?

XIX. DO you know likewise of any that have any way abused the Apparators or other sworn Officers of the Court Ecclesiastical in the execution of their Office?

TIT. V.

Concerning Parish Clerks and Sextons.

I. HAVE you belonging to your Church or Chappel a Parish Clerk aged one and twenty years at the least, is he of honest life and conversation, and sufficient or able to perform his duty in reading, writing and singing? Is he chosen by your Minister, and doth he duly attend him in all Divine Services at the Church? Are his wages duly paid unto him? Or who withholdeth the same from him?

II. DOTH he or your Sexton (if there be any such appointed in your Parish) diligently look to the doors of your Church that they be locked and opened at due time? And doth he keep your Church or Chappel clean from dust, cobwebs, and other annoyance? Doth he Toll or Ring the Bells at the due accustomed hours before the beginning of

Divine

Divine Service Morning and Evening, that the people may be warned to come unto the Church? And when any person is passing out of this life, doth he upon notice given him thereof toll a Bell as hath been accustomed, that the Neighbours may thereby be warned to recommend the dying person to the grace and favour of God?

TIT. VI.

Concerning Hospitals, Schools, School-masters, Physicians, Chirurgeons and Midwives.

I. IS there any Hospital, Almes-house or Free-School founded in your Parish? Who was the Founder or is now the Patron thereof; and what is the yearly revenue or stipend belonging to the Governors or Masters of the same? Is the same ordered and governed in every respect as it ought to be? And are the revenues thereof rightly imployed, according to the intention of the Founder, and of such grants and ordinances as have been made concerning the same?

II. DOTH any man keep a publick or private School in your Parish, who is not allowed thereunto by the Bishop or his Chancellor? Doth your School-master teach his Scholars the Catechism of Religion set forth by Authority? Doth he cause them upon Sundayes and Holy-dayes orderly to repair to your Church or Chappel, and see that they behave themselves there quietly and reverently, during the time of Divine Service and Sermon?

III. DOTH your School-master teach any other Grammar then that which was set forth by King Henry the eight, and hath since continued?

IV. DOTH any man in your Parish practise Physick or Chirurgery, or any woman take upon her to exercise the Office of a Midwife without approbation and Licence from the Ordinary?

TIT.

Tit. VII.

Concerning Church-wardens and Side-men.

I. ARE the Church-wardens of your Parish yearly and duly chosen by the joynt consent of your Minister and Parishioners, or one of them by your Minister, and the other by the Parishioners?

II. HAVE the former and last Church-wardens given up their due accounts to the Parish, and delivered up to the succeeding Church-wardens the monies remaining in their hands, together withall other things belonging to your Church or Chappel?

III. DO you the Church-wardens and Side-men take diligent care, and see who of your Parishioners be absent from the Divine Service and Sermon in your Church or Chappel upon Sundayes and Holy-dayes; and if you find any to have absented themselves without a sufficient cause, do you by warrant from some of the Justices of Peace levy of them by way of distress upon their goods the summe of twelve pence for every such day of their absence, according to the Act of Parliament in that case provided? And do you distribute the several summes so levyed among the poor of your Parish according to the Law?

IV. DO you note them that come late to Church after Divine Service is begun, or depart before it be ended? Do you suffer none to stand idle or talk together in the Church-Porch, or to walk in the Church or Church-yard during the time of Prayers, Preaching, or other sacred Offices?

V. DO you suffer no mis-behaviour or disorders to be done by Men, Women, or Servants, or Children, in your Church or Chappel? Are you careful that none of them sit, lean, or lay their hats upon the Communion-Table? Do you permit no Minstrels, no Morris-dancers, no dogs, hawks or hounds to be brought or come into your Church to the disturbance of the Congregation?

VI. DO you against every Communion appointed in your

your Church or Chappel, provide a sufficient quantity of fine White Bread, and of good Wine, according to the number of the Communicants?

VII. DO you cause all Strangers that Preach in your Church or Chappel to subscribe their names the same day in a Book provided for that purpose, together with the name of the Bishop that Licenced them to Preach in this Diocese, and do you permit no other to Preach?

VIII. HAVE you the Church-wardens and Sidemen, now sworn to give in a true Answer unto all these Articles of Inquiry in all their several Titles, taken sufficient time to draw up your Presentments, and therein consulted with your Minister for his faithful assistance?

FOr know you assuredly, that as the true discharging of your Office is the chief means whereby publick disorders, sins and offences in your Parish may be reformed and punished; so if you wilfully refuse to present such Crimes and Faults, as either you know to have been committed, or otherwise have heard of by publick fame, that in such cases the Bishop and his Officers are to proceed against you in their Ecclesiastical Courts, as in cases of wilful Omission and Perjury.

WILLIAM *Bath and Wells.*

The Ministers of every Parish are desired to give in the Names of such of the younger sort in their several Parishes, as they judge fit to receive Confirmation from the Bishop, and to present them to be confirmed; especially such as having competently learned their Catechism have not yet received the holy Communion.

FINIS.